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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



















Moses Stoddard  
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# CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE

# NAVY DEPARTMENT.

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Buffalo, N.Y.  
1863



# CORRESPONDENCE.

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STODDARD FARM, May 5th, 1863.

HON. ASSISTANT SECRETARY (G. V. FOX) OF THE NAVY:

*Dear Sir,*—The vital existence of this nation—the magnitude of national defences—is a sufficient excuse why all its citizens should think in that direction.

You say a 15-inch gun is wanted, therefore you know it must be a possibility. Well, I like your intrepidity. With equal assurance I affirm a cast-iron gun, of sufficient strength, is an absurdity. If it is possible with other metals to make it sufficient in strength to bear a requisite maximum charge of powder, 20 tons will not counteract recoil. Powder sufficient to drive a 15-inch solid ball with sufficient range and accuracy, will recoil with sufficient force in a 20 or 25-ton gun to knock any turret into the drink—at least into pi. To attain the best possible result from an 8-inch caliber, you require at least 25 tons in weight. For my country's sake, I beg this enlarged caliber monomania may subside.

From the bureaus that have been provided by law to disburse the treasure that has been appropriated for engines, ships-of-war and ordnance, we have nothing to hope. Those chairs are draped in the blood of my fellow-countrymen; their garments are reeking with frauds upon the nation's treasure. Had they have been in Jeff. Davis' Cabinet they would have been comparatively harmless. They name my ideas as my *bantling of no possible promise*. Well, those bantlings have since been admitted into good society in Philadelphia, very prettily complimented in Cincinnati, and deemed worthy of notice and solicitation from officers of tolerably respectable foreign governments. For myself I ask nothing. In common with my fellow-countrymen, who are now investigating these subjects, we demand, in return for national treasure, the fastest war-ships, the best and longest range guns, and shells filled with balls and unquenchable fire—all of which our engineers, mechanics and chemists are able to produce. To attain these results, you are aware, has been my most ardent desire, and for which I have labored with zeal. The future will determine the degree of knowledge. I think you will not impugn my motives. The seed is sown, is beginning to germinate; a portentous public sentiment, no bigger than a man's hand is appearing.



I would that an able hand would place before the people without delay the reason why our President and his Cabinet should not be held responsible for the acts of these bureaus provided by law for this special service, as checks and balances, but whose omissions and commissions now require the most summary interference. Their malpractices are so flagrant no gentle curvature will save a furor of public sentiment. A right-about-face is demanded.

I trust and hope only the guilty may suffer. I long to see the day when Mr. Lincoln may be surrounded by the archimedean power the mechanic, artizan, chemist and engineer of this nation can render in war. When those men can have their skill developed by the fostering hand of government patronage, in a just war we can defy a world in arms. I would not abate one jot or tittle from any just national claim we ever made on land or water. I am willing to fight, but I will not consent that men, whose work to me evidences easy or doubtful loyalty, shall bind upon me weapons known to be the retrograde of progress.

Please acknowledge this, chide me if I deserve it, and believe me your friend and ardent lover of the whole country.

M. STODDARD.

P. S. An association of gentlemen in Buffalo would like to furnish your Department with some propellers built in Buffalo. 143 feet keels could be run through the Canada canals; we can build 100, 110 or 120 feet keels, that are good, staunch sea boats. We will furnish the best security that the minimum speed shall be 14 miles per hour, and for that speed we will fix a price that shall be below cost, and a percentage for every mile above 14 per hour. The trial to be, of course, in smooth or still water. We will undertake to furnish you on 143 feet keel 20 miles per hour, fixing price at 14 miles at less than cost.

The value of such vessels for expresses, blockaders, etc., you understand. We have pretty good authority upon which to base these opinions of speed. I would be glad to direct an investment of this kind. I think I could make it worth millions to the Government by indicating in a clearer light larger investments. With this speed in the vessel I propose, their power of usefulness could not be over-estimated. There is one here now, built for towing on these lakes, whose speed to you would appear incredible. She has been sold for over \$5,000 more than her cost on account of speed.

We have unquestionably upon Lake Erie beat the world both in propellers and side-wheel steamers. We should be glad of an opportunity to make our united skill productive in war appliances.

Respectfully,

MOSES STODDARD.

G. V. Fox, Assistant Secretary U. S. Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, May 12th, 1863.

*Sir*,—Your letter, without date, proposing to build for the Navy Department a propeller vessel of 143 feet keel, of which the speed shall be 20 miles per hour has been received.

As the Department is only in want of vessels for sea service, such a vessel should be strong enough for that purpose, and have condensing engines, with brass propeller. She should also be copper-fastened and coppered. The armament will weigh about 30 tons; the crew will be about 100 persons, with provisions and stores for one month, and not less than 100 tons of coal to be carried in the bunkers. The speed, under steam alone, to be made for 12 successive hours, at the load draft of water with all her weights on board.

You will be good enough to state the price at which you propose to deliver such a vessel at any port on the Atlantic. The vessel to make 20 miles, and the price to be reduced in proportion to the cube of the speed actually made, to the cube of 20. The Department to have the option of rejecting the vessel if she makes less than 14 miles per hour.

Very respectfully,

G. A. FOX,

Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

MR. MOSES STODDARD, Buffalo, N. Y.

STODDARD FARM, May 20th, 1863.

G. V. FOX, ASSISTANT SECRETARY U. S. NAVY:

*Dear Sir*,—I desire to send you a private letter. Imagine yourself a private citizen. I have noticed in you a quick perception and an apparent degree of frankness not common with your surroundings, also decided reserve when deemed necessary. I thought I saw a trace of concealed regret on account of the necessity—perhaps imagination on my part.

This fact is patent to all: our national life is threatened; we have been wounded in our very vitals. Under the guise of friends and supporters vampires have been sucking our vital supports, while their fellows, more honorable and less dangerous, have openly assaulted us in front. That private citizens, in all parts of this land, should be aiding and abetting treason is horrible to contemplate. When we see the evidences that have developed since this *outbreak* in the departments at Washington of active treason, of sympathetic treason, of doubtful loyalty, have we not more reason to ascribe to Providence our salvation thus far from utter ruin, than to our skill and valor in defending our heritage?

We have not exercised the attributes of a strong sovereign government upon traitors caught in the nation's capital in the departments of Government, in the very act of spying an opportunity to save our enemies (the

traitors against humanity of world-wide import), and to inflict fatal wounds upon our national life. The impunity extended crimes, which under all codes of civilized war in all times forfeit life, has warmed into active treason morbid loyalty throughout this land.

The more cautious and wary sugar over their treason. They tell the people it is only a political squabble; that it is a speculators', a contractors' war, gotten up by speculators for the purposes of speculation, and that the originators don't want it ended until the nation's money is exhausted. They adduce as evidences of these allegations: That the ships we build with the nation's treasure to make war efficient can't move with speed; that the guns our ordnance officers construct were known to be worthless by the loyal mechanics and engineers of the nation before they were constructed, and that they protested against their construction. *What can you say, what can I reply, to such specious arguments?*

I know the difficulties that surround the Government officials, I know the division of labor and responsibilities provided by law as checks and balances, I also know of the wrongs, the frauds, the incapacity, that exists in the bureaus, that crops out in these ships and guns. With the Departments, as organized since the war broke out, I don't believe it possible to have constructed within Government yards a ship with power to run down the Alabama, or to have made guns superior to those she carried. It was possible for the heads of those departments to have given notice to my fellow-countrymen, before she made her advent, that this Government wanted a ship that would take the Alabama or drive her from the sea; and that they would pay a liberal price for one or more ships for that purpose. The order would have been filled in four months, perhaps less.

The nation became intoxicated with the fact that the Merrimac did not quite ruin us. We had the assurance at that time to say to the Government, it is not policy to multiply monitors, other nations most probably will, we should build specially to destroy monitors. I assure you it is possible to construct a vessel, that will not cost more than a monitor, that would safely attack and destroy a whole fleet of them, with just as much certainty as a sword fish attacks and destroys a whale. Believing these facts, and loving my country, can my anxiety be suppressed? Can I turn my eyes from the fact that some mighty mechanical genius may espouse the cause of treason? Suppose for one moment a vessel of 20 or 25 miles speed, in every way manageable, presenting but her middle or bearing surface above water, and this an elongated spherical presentation, sufficiently shielded to turn shot; and if she did not carry a gun could she not punch a hole into every blockader off Charleston? Or suppose she was mounted with one such gun as I shadowed to you, of 8-inch caliber, she could choose her distance and unchangeably fix revolving turrets.



We have a foe to contend with that has been reared upon human blood, that no treaty can bind, that regards not an oath; that can don the livery of a devotee to make the assassination of a country, government, mother, friend, more fatal. They have been accustomed to dealing in human rights. Pirates and gamblers in human life, they care little for their own life. Have we less at stake? If we are mean enough to surrender our own rights, have we a right to fritter away the legacy of our fathers, of which we are only the legatees for future transmission? Or to expose it to such imminent peril as we have done, in consuming the sinews of war without producing efficient speed in war-ships, and guns up to the best practical mechanical science?

The time has arrived when the Government requires the active support of all loyal citizens, their combined support and utmost skill and courage, to carry this nation through surrounding dangers. We have no more time to lose, no more treasure to waste, in ships and guns that don't develop the best known mechanical and nautical science. The vestment of another dollar in big cast iron guns is treason, no matter by whom perpetrated. The people know better now. Those men that fraudulently reported their trial and merits knew better then; they lied to defraud a confiding people. Have we not a right in these times to judge of men's motives by their acts? We were early taught, "by their acts ye shall know them."

Since this war commenced I have given the subject of vessel construction some thought. I frankly say to you, I have not studied any books on naval architecture, hydraulics or hydrostatics. I have constructed mill-dams and bulk-heads, have experienced forcible illustrations of the lateral resistance and non-elasticity of water in putting up bulk-heads against resisting floods, or changing bearings, etc. I doubt if Professor Henry, in his elaborate investigation of laws of force and resistance, has experienced more forcible illustrations than I have of force and resistance in some of the narrow escapes of life and limb in these pursuits. And if the occasion has indelibly fixed in my mind a natural physical or philosophical fact, may it not be just as valuable, practically as useful as if I had drank it in more diluted draughts further from the fountain, or even in the Professor's class. I am satisfied we can not overcome resistance by putting power in a vessel to attain the desired speed. Faster than at the rate of 3 or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour I don't think we can force water to give way. Say you draw a line from center of stem to stern post, another parallel to that at the end of longest beam. Now at the rate the water will have to pass from the stem to the second line when the boat is under way, will give you an inkling of her speed fixing it at 3 miles, which is probably all that can be made profitable, and doubtful if you can attain 4 miles. If this is correct, and it is believed to be about the attained results here, how important it is to look in the direction of avoid-

ing resistance in reducing the beam, instead of the impossible task of overcoming the comparative non-elastic resistance of water by adding to the power. If this is correct, it is to be regretted that the vessel you named to me Mr. Steers and Dickerson were constructing of 300 feet keel and 41 beam had not been even more cut down in beam. They undoubtedly will attain very good results compared to Government vessels of the past. With the immense wastes attending our failures we certainly ought to make some startling departures from existing models.

In relation to ordnance I am perfectly angry that the men we have educated and paid for long life service can't give me the information I desire, to solve the problems that are presented to my mind for solution, and which are so important to know. My limited experience, and still more limited experiments, have forced upon me these conclusions.

1st. That large cast-iron guns have had their time; their place is with the obsolete. That enlargement of caliber is not desired, but enlargement of maximum charges of powder, which require guns of much greater length and strength, and much greater weight. That guns firing large charges of powder must inevitably have immense weight. There is no other way practicable to resist recoil. Your monitor guns, with their large calibers, with a charge of powder to make them efficient from recoil (if the gun did not burst) would be more dangerous to us than our enemies.

Rifled guns, and lead or any metal depended on to fill grooves, is of doubtful utility either for small arms or large guns. I believe it entirely practicable to use a linen patch, seamless and without folds, upon projectiles for rifled cannon or small arms. I believe our field artillery and boat howitzers would be far more effective if their calibers were reduced fifty per cent., use the same charge of powder as now, and retain the same weight of metal in guns as now, the recoil would be greatly lessened.

I know a style of mounting the guns can be adopted that will greatly facilitate accurate elevations, that will more than double their execution, and without in any manner impairing their mobility, or liability to casualties.

MOSES STODDARD.

BUFFALO, May 16th, 1863.

ASSISTANT SEC'Y U. S. NAVY, G. V. FOX:

Sir,—Your favor of 12th instant, came to hand yesterday, acknowledging mine without date. Gentle intimation. I have before felt the emphasis of your silence.

I will build you a propeller as large as we can get through the Canada locks, I think 143, perhaps 145 feet in length, which shall be every way seaworthy; shall carry coal, armament and fixtures you name; shall be copper-

fastened. I think 100 men more than required for her class. At any rate she shall carry a requisite number with supplies as you name. She shall be built in a proper manner, of proper material. Both hull and engine shall do honor to her contractors. She shall evidence throughout that her contractors intended to make her one of the most efficient vessels of her class ever built. She will be delivered on the Atlantic coast, complete, for sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000), making fourteen statute miles per hour; and for every mile over that up to 20 miles per hour \$10,000 for every mile over 14. If you want brass propeller (which our engineers think entirely unnecessary) its cost over and above iron extra; also extra for copper bottom. We would not touch her if we did not feel confident of attaining 18 miles. We intend she shall make 20 miles, and do the country efficient service. We will pledge our honor to do our best. Two years ago we could have built her for a much less sum. I find material and labor greatly advanced. She must be every way extra in fastenings and strength, to meet the demand of a great propelling power.

We will furnish your Department with security that shall be entirely satisfactory to the Government, for the performance of our undertaking; and in return ask of you the pay for work, say two-thirds, as the work progresses, the balance when completed, proved, and delivered as specified above.

We will also undertake to get her up with dispatch. We would prefer you would let us build two or more at the same time.

With assurances of esteem,

M. STODDARD.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, June 6th, 1863.

SIR,—Your letter of May 16th has been received, but it is not in conformity with your original offer. The Department desires your proposition for a vessel to make the 20 miles named by you under the conditions expressed in its letter of May 12th. Your offer must be without extras of any kind, and payment will be made when the vessel is tried and accepted.

Very respectfully,

GIDEON WELLES,  
Secretary of the Navy.

MR. MOSES STODDARD, Buffalo, N. Y.

BUFFALO, June 9th, 1863.

HON. GIDEON WELLES, SEC. U. S. NAVY:

Hon. Sir,—Your letter of 6th inst., acknowledging mine of 16th is received. The Canada locks, I am informed by those claiming to know, are 145 feet in length; that will limit us in length of boat.



Your requirements in carrying capacity cramp our views a little on that length of vessel. *We shall not* shrink from undertaking to furnish the Department 20 statute miles per hour with a vessel we can build upon these lakes and run through the Canada canals, with capacity to meet Department's views for efficient service, believing the Department will nicely adjust the question of speed and carrying capacity, admitting speed as one of the primary elements of efficiency.

We will build the Department such a vessel copper-fastened, copper-bottomed, with brass propeller of proper material — fastenings superior to any vessel ever built upon these lakes, all complete for use. Her wood-work and engine-work shall do honor to American mechanics in every particular in regard to proportion and strength. We will not go into fancy and ornamental; it shall be plain, but good style of work.

We will furnish Department such a vessel that will make twenty (20) statute miles per hour, for \$150,000, or two at \$145,000 each. If their speed falls below twenty (20) miles per hour, Department may deduct \$10,000 per mile for every mile short of 20 to 18; if below 18 miles deduct \$15,000 per mile; if below 14 miles Department is not required to take them at all.

I find, on examination, my consulting mechanical engineers have been too much influenced in their estimates by the cost of work made for commercial purposes; in fact the style of work I propose to get up we would be more likely to under-estimate than over. We very well know that the speed we are proposing has never been produced, if ever, not for this amount of money. We believe we can produce 20 miles; we also know that if we can, its worth to our country will be untold millions, and that upon a larger scale greater speed is attainable. We are willing to try to demonstrate progress. If the Department desire fraternity and coöperation, there will be no difficulty in fixing details, conditions, etc. The mechanics and engineers on these lakes are desirous to contribute to the Nation's strength in war; we believe we are able to do it; our efforts will be accompanied with a will if we are ever permitted to try. We are proud of our nautical productions on these lakes; we believe we can excel any effort hitherto made.

With highest consideration,

MOSES STODDARD.

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NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 10, 1863.

SIR,—Your letter of the 9th ult., has been received. The proposition therein named by you is at the rate of about \$330 per ton, which far exceeds anything the Department has paid. The reduction you propose in price, is not in proportion to the cube of the speed, and a proposition was

expected from you on the terms of your first letter to the department and its reply thereto.

Very respectfully,

GIDEON WELLES,  
Secretary of Navy.

Mr. MOSES STODDARD, Buffalo, N. Y.

BUFFALO, June 20th, 1863.

HON. G. V. FOX, ASSISTANT SEC'Y U. S. NAVY:

*Sir*,—I acknowledge your civility in the flying call I made at your office Tuesday evening last week. Your statements were listened to with profound attention. However wide the margin that separates our opinions, it is a decided acknowledgment to honor me with these statements. Substantially you charge me with advocating too rapid progress. I thank you even for this tacit admittance. You have listened to me with attention; replied by adducing facts, arguments, figures and illustrations.

Your facts, 1280 feet velocity at muzzle of 15-inch gun, and with 50lbs. powder and hollow shot. We have long since had the official report of government sworn ordnance officers, of 1328 feet with 35 or 40lbs. adulterated powder.

What do the public care about the initial velocity at muzzle of gun? Why will not the ordnance officers tell us the initial velocity with which they can inflict a blow at one mile, three-quarters, half, and quarter of a mile? This is practicable; and why should not trial shots be made with solid shot and at elevations? It is not expected that gun practice will hereafter, to any extent, come within a fourth of a mile, and not probably within half a mile. Speed and range is now the struggle.

You say most of the taxpayers know nothing of mechanics and engineering; therefore the money should not be vested in war appliances in accordance to the utmost skill and genius of our ablest mechanics and engineers, who pay but small part of revenue. We had supposed it heretofore, a predisposing infirmity of our people to boast of the skill and progress of our government officials in war appliances. I assure you there is nothing so mortifying to these same taxpayers as the facts that are now developing, which demonstrate to them that these government officials have failed to make good their boasting.

You assert that progress should be slow and gradual. In support of it you introduced a geological figure. You said the earth was formed by immensely slow and gradual formations — strata rising above strata — and by depots of inconceivable insects, etc., etc. I replied, it sometimes advances by rapid and irresistible impulses; that mountains were upheaved, islands disap-

peared or were thrown to the surface — the work of a day or hour. You denied the fact. I will respectfully refer you to authority.

(We omit geological authority quoted, and remarks.)

You assert that a cannon suspended would throw a projectile as far as if imbedded in solid masonry. I would respectfully enquire how far the projectile would go if it was of the same weight as the suspended gun? and will you be influenced by the failure of your facts, figures or illustrations?

The people are forgiving. They will soon forget the past if they can see reforms entered upon in earnest. They can only be diverted by seeing the future investments productive of efficiency in war. There is an investigation of these subjects pervading the people at this time, that has no parallel in the history of this country — perhaps no other. I earnestly entreat you to accept its teachings. Fraternize with it — encourage it. Frankly own the demonstrated errors of the past as an earnest enquirer after truth and progress. The people will gratefully remember you for so doing.

With consideration and respect,

M. STODDARD.

STODDARD FARM, July 15, 1863.

HON. G. WELLES, SEC'Y U. S. NAVY:

*Sir*,—I have the honor to receive your letter of 10th inst., in which the honorable secretary says: "The proposition named by you is at the rate of about \$330 per ton, which far exceeds anything the Department has paid."

I would respectfully suggest the Department would estimate the cost of my proposition, by comparing the cube of the speed proposed with that of the Miami (the Miami by the press was reported to have made two miles per hour on her first trip) and numerous other vessels of the Department.

You also say, "The reduction you propose in price is not in proportion to the cube of the speed, and a proposition was expected from you on the terms of your first letter to the Department, and the reply thereto."

I will build one or more vessels on the terms of my first letter, and the Department's reply thereto, and will meet the Department and in my presence allow them to fix the terms from those letters.

And second, I will offer to get up for the Department a vessel that shall make 20 miles per hour — if she fails Department not required to accept or pay — and she shall combine other qualities requisite to make her efficient in service. This can only be done by an aggregation of varied mechanical power and capital. Price and other unimportant details to be mutually arranged.

With consideration and respect,

MOSES STODDARD.



P. S.—As an addendum to the foregoing, I may be allowed to observe. I have carefully looked over the first letter above referred to. I cannot see the discrepancy reiterated by the Department. Doubtless I am not versed in the language and forms pertaining to a diplomatist, and entitled to your consideration. The excitement of our national calamity has no doubt thrown to the surface individuals from whom your Department otherwise would never have heard. Nothing short, I am sure, would have influenced me to trespass upon your time. With a trembling hand I pulled your latch-string in April, 1862; I was courteously received and referred to Capt. Fox, who in a five minutes' conversation substantially awarded my ideas as partaking of life and progress. I shall always remember that interview, and shall not question the motive. It served its purpose with me then. It was just a straw that encouraged me to think on and work. I had then encountered the Army Ordnance Bureau — I have since the Navy Ordnance. That encounter is now a matter of history, and has fixed in my mind their intellectual and mechanical standard, and its influence is working its own elaboration. If the facts and arguments are mine, they can only say with a historic character, "Let the people say I have got the crown."

The Hon. Secretary's letter to Capt. Rogers was sent to me in a navy envelope, I suppose to vindicate the 15-inch guns from charges preferred by me. In the name of our mechanics and engineers, who have expressed to me their views on that part of the letter only that relates to the big gun, we protest against.

We cannot see how the Atlanta aground and at short range (150 yards), and only 2-inch iron shield and 8 inches wood can be considered any test at all in this age of progress. True, she had an inner skin of two-inch iron bolted on. (This description of Atlanta's shield is taken from the press.)

I would respectfully enquire if the test has not fixed the facts that bolts, even in our heavy shielded vessels, are driven by the dozen inward, by the concussion of a single shot; and does not this fact settle the question that the Atlanta's inner skin made her far more dangerous to her own crew than even if she had no shield at all? and has any person alleged that 2 inches iron and 8 of wood was protection against the most ordinary ordnance? (A friend who has just examined, says that Atlanta's shield is 4 inches iron with 18 inches wood backing.)

I acknowledge obligations for the attention I have received from the Department in these letters relating to construction of vessels. I felt that if there was a real fraternity it would be manifest in offering to advance a part of cost of construction as work progressed, and in view of testing that feeling I made that statement for advance as the work progressed, with the offer of security that should be satisfactory to the Department. We think we were entitled to that advance, and yet we do not now make it conditional to filling any order we might receive from Department.

It is not now essential to us that we build anything for the Department. The agonizing anxiety and labor attending the construction of any new and experimental work I cannot estimate by money value; nothing but a consciousness of aiding defences and approving fraternity of the Department would to me be remunerative.

When I can feel my country safe I shall not be troubling any Department, and no influence but the simple merit of my own ideas and mechanical friends shall be used to procure a contract of any kind for me or my associates. My labor and my life is at my country's service, without reserve, whenever it can be useful. I would have been glad to have been spared doing or saying by some unaccountable impulse, the acts and words that have fixed the people's attention upon the Bureau. The assurance I have received, and am receiving, of the correctness of my intuitive opinions from eminent men, in public and private life, at home and foreign, is a solace for past asperities.

The Department can answer the business part of this letter, declining it if it chooses or accepting it as a preliminary for a more specific arrangement. I would like an answer by return, as it will have a material influence with me in future arrangements. I think I will never again trouble you with a long epistle.

M. STODDARD.

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BUFFALO, June 29th, 1863.

HON. G. V. FOX, ASSISTANT SEC'Y U. S. NAVY:

*Sir*,—I thank you for forwarding me, under official frank, copy of National Intelligencer, with a pen mark drawing attention to the Hon. Gideon Welles' official letter to Capt. Rogers. Also for your marginal note referring me to Sir Charles Lyell for authority for the extract I made in my last note to your Department, in which I had the honor to say to you was an extract from a communication of a friend. If it is substantially a quotation or compilation (which I do not doubt) from different standard authorities, how eminently I am sustained in the reply I made to your statement "that the earth was not formed by impulses or sudden upheavings." I have not now before me the work of Sir Charles Lyell to which you refer me; if I had I should take with caution his statements when not corroborated by other standard works on the same subject. I have witnessed the carelessness of his observations. In his writings, when he was traveling in this State in the month of September, he describes the sugar maple, from which sugar is made (as witnessed that time by himself), the sap of which was everywhere trickling down into wooden troughs from gashes made in the bark. Did you ever make sugar in September?

Your boldness and intrepidity I like. I want to get you on the right track, and freed from the dead weights that drag you down.

I freely join the Hon. Secretary in his letter of commendation to Capt. Rogers. I rejoice at any success on land or water. I will not be satisfied until I can feel assured we have demonstrated the utmost progress in war appliances on land and water, commensurate with the genius and skill of our people.

As I have taken decided ground against the 15-inch gun, which is simply a revival of the discarded bombards of the sixteenth century, and have protested against the false and lying official reports of their performance, and upon which the public have been wheedled out of untold millions in their construction and attendant fixtures.

I presume that part of the Hon. Secretary's letter which relates to the 15-inch gun influenced you in marking and sending me the paper. That our boasted iron clads have met an old merchant vessel remodeled by rebel enterprise into a war vessel in a narrow, crooked channel where no opportunity presented for profiting by her superior speed, simply proves what I have before stated to you of the audacity of our enemies; also it demonstrates what no one has pretended to deny, that a 15-inch shot, at short range and small charge of powder, would give a crushing blow. It is not believed that naval fights are hereafter to be contested at close quarter, if so other means than guns will be used. The contest now is with speed in ships and range in guns.

The same 22 tons weight you now have in your 15-inch gun, if it was made of proper material into an eight-inch caliber gun of proper proportions, would throw a two-hundred pound bolt with more powder than is now used in monitors' 15-inch guns, and at one mile would be just as efficient as your monitors' 15-inch at close quarters. Steel pointed shells could be thrown at great distances with sufficient force to pierce iron clads, or forts of masonry, and exploding would be destructive to forts at distance; our monitors would be comparatively safe. The present experience of the world would seem to make it idle to talk about getting more powerful guns by increasing caliber and reducing maximum charge.

What we most want Mr. Secretary, is vessels that can out-sail our enemies, and guns of longer range than any possessed by them. The genius of American mechanics can produce both. Can you not devise some means to make it available in war? Until that can be done I beg that our commerce may be called in, rather than be made a prey to pirates, who tempted with so rich a bate will spring up like hydra monsters in every nook of our indented coast and rivers.

M. STODDARD.



BUFFALO, August 15th, 1863.

HON. SEC'Y GIDEON WELLES:

*Sir*,—I called at your Department on Wednesday of this week, to show Capt. Fox a project for a wrought iron gun, represented by a drawing, presenting a gun that is entirely within the range of our mechanical fixtures and ability to construct; the dimensions of which place it within the reach of science to determine its attacking force. From its 8-inch caliber I have no doubt it would eject a projectile with the explosive force of the weight of a round iron ball in powder, and that it would impart to a 200 or 225lb. bolt a higher velocity than has been attained in this or any other country.

I sent this drawing into the Department for examination by the Hon. Secretary, whose messenger returned it to me with the request that I would take it to the Ordnance Department.

We have encountered those Bureaus, and fixed their moral, intellectual, and mechanical status. The love we bear our country has impelled us to speak the truth to the sovereign people, and give the reasons why Alabamas go unpunished, and Sumter's and McAllister's walls so long successfully defy a mighty nation's power, but which is chained down by a legally constituted set of Bureaus, whose frauds, empiricisms and mechanical incompetency is now well known. I will not hold converse with those bureaus of ordnance, and you, Mr. Secretary, and the President will be held responsible for the longer toleration of official insolence and mechanical incapacity that rules the bureaus of this nation, who are intrusted with the nation's treasure and vest it in second-rate vessels and second-rate guns.

Hecatombs of my fellow-countrymen have been, and are still unnecessarily sacrificed, who might have been spared if the nation's money could have been vested in ships and guns with the best mechanical skill and genius the nation possessed. With pain and humiliation I am compelled to make these statements; I owe it to my country. I would feign excuse myself with a plea of hallucination or monomania, but I am daily receiving assurances from eminent men in public and private life, that I am right, and that my work is exercising a healthful influence, and insist that I must continue to think and give expression to living progressive ideas. I have presented no idea to your Department but what is demonstrable by mechanical science.

I will state a fact to the Hon. Secretary; I wish you specially to ponder upon it. It may be valuable for you to know the artisan of Buffalo will tell you the speed of every or any vessel in the navy if you will furnish lines, model of vessel, specifications of engine, etc. If this can be done correctly, and which can be demonstrated by the known performance of those in commission, it certainly can be done with those now under construction and projected; and the same rules will test any well-defined project.

MOSES STODDARD.

BUFFALO, Sept. 30, 1863.

HON. G. V. FOX, ASSISTANT SEC'Y U. S. NAVY:

*Sir*,—In the several interviews I had the honor to receive at your office about the middle of this month with the Assistant Secretary, I was forcibly impressed with your statements, and thought I had fully discharged my whole duty so far as relates to intercourse with the Department.

As the subjects of our correspondence and interviews is so vital to life, so vast in national import, and considering that my previous correspondence with your Department is a fixed historical fact, reflection impresses upon me a reply to your statements in these late interviews. So mighty are the consequences involved, personal consideration ceases in oblivion.

If any words I may hereafter speak seem to have personal application, remember it is because the individual stands for Government Department or Bureaus, and represent the people in means and measures upon the success of which the nation's existence hinges.

The Assistant Secretary, in the above-named interviews, said to me that the Weehawken's encounter with the Atlanta was at 400 or 450 yards; also, that the Atlanta was not aground until disabled and driven aground.

In Mr. Seward's circular to Foreign Ministers and Governments, the Secretary says, "At 5 o'clock 15 minutes, at 300 yards, the Weehawken engaged the Atlanta, she *having then grounded*."

Eye witnesses, whose only business there was to report the facts, speak of the encounter at 150 yards. It is reasonable to suppose that if it commenced at 300 it might end at 150 yards, and their published report after examining the Atlanta's shield of wood and iron, is widely at variance with the statement you gave me.

Also in those same interviews you repeatedly and unqualifiedly told me I might make for the Department one wrought iron gun, at \$1 per pound, of my own plan. But not six, as I proposed. If you gave a quantity to any one you said Mr. Ames was entitled to them. And when I accepted your proposition to build one gun, you stammered, hesitated, said I must be referred, and denied granting me your own offer. With these palpable evidences, who shall I believe even in regard to these conflicting statements of the Atlanta, etc. You also told me you were firing 60lbs. of powder from the test gun of 15-inch caliber, at the navy yard, and obtaining over 1500 feet per second velocity.

Allow me to say to you, you dare not fire that gun five times with 60lbs. powder of good quality, proved by chemical tests, and with a solid shot at elevation sufficient to give its full range, in the presence of disinterested engineers. And with 60lbs. powder you can't throw the ball 1500 feet from muzzle of gun in one second; nor one half mile at 800 feet per second; nor one mile at 700 feet per second.

And furthermore, your *exparte* trials in the hands of officers who already

stand before the public with garments reeking with frauds upon the nation's treasure, shall we be asked to accept of further perfidy in justification of prior perjuries made to conceal robberies of national treasure at a time when national life is vibrating over the brink of ruin? Believing these statements to be truths, can I hold my peace? Is there not danger that these officers, when they can no longer conceal their robberies will turn incendiaries?

You said to me, that I did not want to furnish vessels or guns, if I did I would not talk so; and after a pause you added, "you talk very well, but it do n't sound business or as if you wanted a contract." I was not prepared to understand or reply. I now suppose the rendering should be: That if I wanted a contract I must become toad-eater, a parasite, an emasculated man, at least *particeps criminis* in the treasury frauds and mechanical incapacity that pervades the Bureaus, who are appointed by law to receive the vast national treasure appropriated for ships of war and ordnance; but who have not furnished us in return for treasure one single fast war ship fit to do the police of the sea, or one single wrought iron gun of great attacking power, both of which the genius and skill of private enterprize would have furnished to order. Loyal and patriotic mechanics wanted to do it. They offered to guarantee unprecedented speed in ships and range in wrought iron guns that would *not burst*. But such guns and such ships would burst the veil that conceals from the people the means by which the Bureaus restrain the genius of a mighty people. The mechanics of our inland lakes alone, would have sealed up those Southern ports with fast going propellers, built here and run through the Canada locks. Long time ago they wanted to do it. They offered to get up a class of vessels for that especial purpose, whose minimum speed should be 14 miles and maximum 20 miles per hour, and price in accordance to demonstrated performance. Such vessels would have stopped English vessels from carrying English guns and English cartridges to Southern rebels, to murder loyal men. Our dead in the field and in the deep are mainly chargeable to the omissions and commissions of the Bureaus. They are substantially the ruling oligarchy of this nation. Would that we could see evidence of their ruling with loyal ability, inviting to their aid and fostering mechanical skill in the direction of appliances for war. I have not overstated the ability of our mechanics to produce fast war ships and wrought iron guns. Loyal, experienced and able mechanics sustain me in these opinions, and capital, always cautious, is willing to back up those opinions.

I can now see clearly that your Bureaus are committed: a fast war ship, a wrought iron gun of unprecedented range and power, would spoil their occupation; it would burst the greatest monopoly and fraud that has transpired in modern times. The issue is taken; it remains to be seen how much time it will require for the people to digest and apply the remedy. Audacity is the very element of the success hitherto of Bureaucracy.

With assurances, etc.,

MOSES STODDARD.



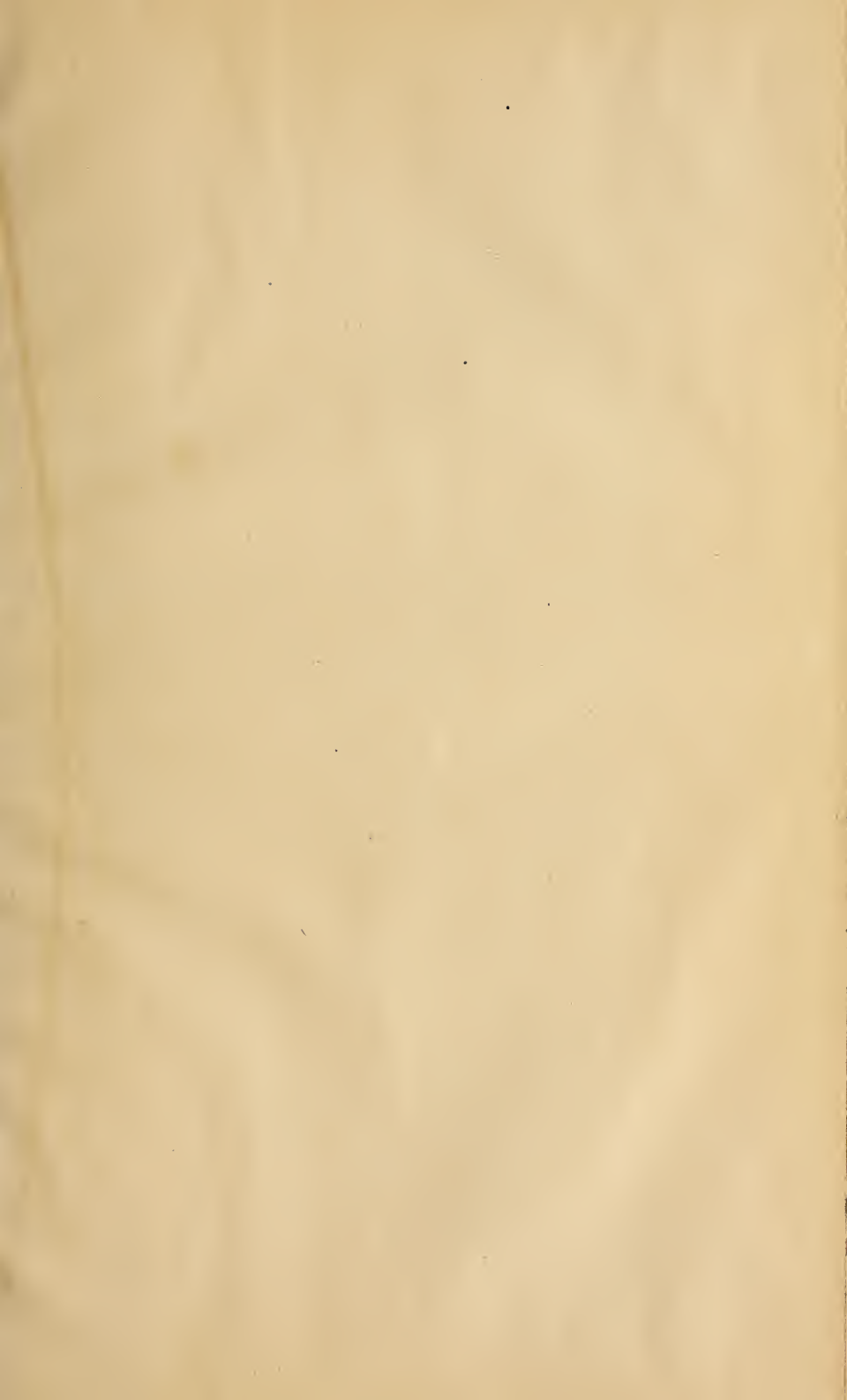
This is to certify, that on or about the middle of Sept., 1863, in several interviews with G. V. Fox, Assistant Sec'y U. S. Navy, the said Assistant Sec'y said I might make one 8-inch wrought iron gun, of my own plan, for the Department at \$1 per pound. When I accepted the offer he refused to allow me to execute his own offer.

MOSES STODDARD.

Sworn before me, Nov. 16, 1863.

WM. W. MANN,  
Com'r of Deeds in and for city of Buffalo, N. Y.

























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